CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location of the area

The area under investigation lies in and around Khonoma (longitude 94°0' to 94°5'; latitude 25°38' to 25°43'), within Kohima district of Nagaland. Nagaland is situated in the Northern extension of Arakan Yoma ranges, is one of the North-Eastern states of the Indian Union (Fig.1). Nagaland state comprises seven districts namely — Kohima, Wokha, Mokokchung, Mon, Tuensang, Zunhebeto and Phek (Fig. 2). The Khonoma village (longitude 94°1'46", latitude 25°40'25") is located on a saddle, projected from the Barail Range within the Kohima district at about 25 kms away from the Kohima town, the capital of Nagaland towards west (Fig.3). Prior to human habitation this village was covered with mountain shrub with 'Khwiino'; the name Khonoma derived from 'Khwiino' and 'ma' means people (in Angami).

1.2 Communication

Nagaland, the north-eastern state of the Indian Union is connected with rest of the India by the Railway with station at Dimapur, which is the only railway station of the state. It is also connected with air service via Dimapur, the main commercial town of the state (Fig.4). The area of studies lies in the south-west corner of the Kohima district (Nagaland). Kohima, the capital of Nagaland is connected with Dimapur by the National Highway No.39, which is also linked with Imphal, the capital of Manipur state. The Khonoma village
is connected by a narrow motorable road with Kohima town. The communication is not suitable, because Nagaland State Transport buses are the only buses, which plies in a day. Walking along the footpaths is only possible way to traverse the different parts of the study area.

1.3 Physiography

1.3(i) Topography

The area of study as a whole consists of tumbled mass of hills covered with evergreen thick forest with green deep valley. The area belongs to the western hilly region of Kohima sub-division where hills are high, having no definite alignment. Japvi (longitude 94°4', latitude 25°36') being the highest peak, 3,015 meters in altitude commands the highest range of the Kohima district, lies towards the south of the area. The main Khonoma village is situated at an elevation of about 1,518 meters above the sea level. The highest relief near the study area is the peak "Polubadze" (2,364 m, longitude 94°5' and latitude 25°38'30"), the 2nd highest peak of the Kohima district and the lowest relief area is about 1,100 meters towards north of the area, near Zubza village (longitude 94°2'30" and latitude 25°43').

1.3(ii) Drainage

The drainage pattern of the area is mainly influenced by Dzuha Ru(N) and its number of small tributaries (Fig. 5). The Dzuha Ru(N)
originating from the study area (Western Angami Area), flow in northernly direction and meet the Dayang river, towards north and finally join the Dhansiri river in the plain towards further north. The Dzuha Ru(N) is very torrential during summer, influenced by the rain water coming down from the hilly area, where as it dries out during winter (ephemeral stream).

1.3(iii) Rain fall

The average rainfall of the area is about 180 cms. Mostly the rain occurs during the monsoon period, which extends from May to the last part of September during the year. But the rain is very scanty during winter season (i.e. October to April).

1.3(iv) Climate

The area lies under northern temperate zone and its climate is somewhat typical of tropical countries. The climatic condition in and around the area is moderately to cool during the summer and bracing winter, specially from December to February. In summer temperature varies from 30°C to 8°C, while in winter it falls down below 0°C. According to the characteristics of the climate it can be summerised as follows —

(a) December to February — coldest periods

(b) March and April — retreating of summer with frequent dust wind and warmth, moderately pleasant climate

(c) May to September — mainly rainy season, sometimes continuous for a week or so.
3.1(v) Vegetation, flora and fauna

Nagaland is one of the rich in its floritic composition in the North-Eastern part of India. Common shrubs and under-shrubs cover almost all the hills including Bochmeris, Breynia, Sal, Goldmohar, Ficus etc. Common herbs are Impations, Abutilon, Bidens, Ginura etc. in and around the area. There are numerous orchids in the jungle, amongst them Vanda, Dendrobium, Celegyne, Bulbophyllum etc. are the most common.

The major faunistic representatives are Rats, Guineapigs, Squirrels, Wildcats, Bison and Muthun etc. Besides, poisonous and non-poisonous snakes, Lizards, Butterflies and Moths, Cockroaches, Bees, Snails etc. are also found in the forest of Nagaland. Moreover, varieties of birds, insects, earthworm and leaches of diverse varieties are also found.

The process of 'Jhoom' or shifting cultivation is mainly practised by the local tribes. The main crops of the area are paddy, maize and cotton.